

REMARKS

I. Formalities

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references cited with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on September 17, 2003.

Applicants thank the Examiner for acknowledging the election without traverse of claims 1, 2, and 5 in the Response to Restriction Requirement filed on January 20, 2004.

II. Status of the Application

Claims 1, 2, and 5 are all the claims pending in the Application, with claim 1 being in independent form. Claims 1, 2, and 5 have been rejected.

III. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,249,264 to Sano *et al.* (hereinafter “Sano”), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,900,694 to Matsuzaki (hereinafter “Matsuzaki”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for *at least* the reasons stated below.

The grounds of rejection acknowledge that Sano fails to teach or suggest that a single sustain electrode is provided in common for a first and a second pixel cell adjacent to each other in the column direction. In an attempt to remedy the deficient teachings and suggestions of Sano, the grounds of rejection rely on Matsuzaki, alleging that it would have been obvious to one

of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of Sano with the teachings of Matsuzaki to arrive at the present invention. Applicants respectfully disagree with the grounds of rejection.

In particular, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine Sano and Matsuzaki, as proposed in the grounds of rejection. According to the MPEP § 2141.02, “a prior art reference must be considered in its entirety, i.e., as a whole, including portions that would lead away from the claimed invention” (emphasis in original).

Matsuzaki teaches a gas discharge display panel wherein the main discharge electrodes have bus electrodes made of an opaque material, and the bus electrodes constitute a frame surrounding the periphery of each display cell. *See* column 3, lines 20-25. That is, Matsuzaki teaches a structure wherein contrast is improved by covering the main discharge electrodes with an opaque material around the periphery of each display cell. Therefore, Matsuzaki would, in fact, lead one of ordinary skill in the art away from the present invention, which claims the feature of a display electrode portion which has a notched portion or a cut-away portion spaced apart from the ribs 16 of each display cell. Accordingly, one of ordinary skill would not have been motivated to arbitrarily select the electrode from Matsuzaki and combine it with Sano to arrive at the present invention.

As discussed above, in analyzing the issue of motivation to combine, the Examiner must consider the references as a whole. In contrast, the Examiner has selected only one feature from the entire display panel of Matsuzaki, to the exclusion of the remaining features. However, there is no support in either Sano or Matsuzaki for selectively picking and choosing features in this way. Rather, it is only after having the benefit of Applicants’ own disclosure that one is able to

selectively separate features of Matsuzaki in an attempt to piece together Applicants' claimed combination.

Further, not only would there have been no motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings of Sano and Matsuzaki, but neither Sano, Matsuzaki, nor any combination thereof, teaches or suggests all of the limitations of claims 1, 2, and 5. Indeed, for the Examiner to maintain a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103, Sano, Matsuzaki, or some combination thereof, must teach or suggest all of the limitations of claims 1, 2, and 5.

Independent claim 1 recites (among other things):

...wherein at least part of the display electrode portion has a notched portion or a cut-away portion between pixel cells adjacent to each other in the row direction, thereby providing each pixel cell with individually separated electrodes...

Neither Sano, Matsuzaki, nor any combination thereof, teaches or suggests a display electrode portion which has a notched portion or a cut-away portion between pixel cells adjacent to each other in the row direction, as recited in Applicants' claim 1. Indeed, the Examiner has not pointed to any structure in either Sano or Matsuzaki which corresponds to a display electrode portion that has a notched portion or a cut-away portion. In contrast, as discussed in the Specification of the present application, because the scan electrode 13b and the sustain electrode 13a are spaced apart from the ribs 16, adjacent thereto in the row direction, the discharge at portions of low luminous efficiency near the rib 16 is prevented to thereby increase the ratio of light emission from portions of high luminous efficiency, thereby making it possible to increase

luminous intensity with respect to the amount of input power. *See* Specification, page 29, line 31 – page 30, line 5.

In contrast to the recitations of claim 1, Sano teaches that barrier ribs of a second type 50, of the same height and material as barrier ribs of a first type 29, are formed on a second substrate in parallel with each other along a first direction D1, to which display electrodes XE and YE extend. However, Sano fails to teach or suggest a display electrode portion which has a notched portion or a cut-away portion between pixel cells adjacent to each other in the row direction, as recited in Applicants' claim 1. In fact, Sano teaches quite the opposite—that the electrodes XE and YE are arranged parallel to each other and extend along the row direction (i.e., first direction D1) without any notches or cut-away portions of any kind. *See* column 21, lines 7-10; Figure 5.

Indeed, it is clear from Figure 4 of Sano that the “column” direction corresponds to the direction in which the address electrodes 22 extend (i.e., second direction D2). Further, the Examiner acknowledges that the address electrodes 22 extend in the “column” direction in that the Examiner alleges that the address electrodes 22 of the rear panel (which extend in the second direction D2) correspond to “a plurality of electrodes provided on said rear substrate which extend longitudinally in the column direction,” as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, the Examiner also thereby acknowledges that the “row” direction corresponds to the direction in which the electrodes XE and YE extend (i.e., first direction D1).

Moreover, Figures 4 and 5 of Sano clearly show that electrodes XE and YE do not have any notches or cut-away portions whatsoever. To the contrary, Sano explicitly teaches that electrodes XE and YE cross directly over the barrier ribs of the first type 29, without being spaced apart from the ribs 29 in the row direction. *See* Figure 4-5. Therefore, Sano does not teach, and is incapable of suggesting, that the electrodes XE and YE have a notched portion or a cut-away portion between pixel cells adjacent to each other in the row direction, as recited in Applicants' claim 1. Further, Matsuzaki does not cure the deficient teachings of Sano.

Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over Sano, Matsuzaki, and any combination thereof, for *at least* these reasons. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the dependent claims 2 and 5 are allowable *at least* by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Response Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No.: 09/909,910

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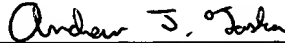
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